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April 16, 2003

Ms. Jaya Zyman-Ponebshek  
URS Corporation  
P.O. Box 201088  
Austin, TX 78720-1088

FD 34284

Dear Ms. Zyman-Ponebshek:

The purpose of this letter is to provide comments regarding the petition filed by Southwest Gulf Railroad Company (SGRC) for the proposed construction and operation of a railroad line from a proposed Vulcan Materials Company (VMC) limestone quarry to a connection with the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRC) in Medina County, Texas. The Edwards Aquifer Authority (Authority) received your letter requesting preliminary comments on April 1, 2003. The Authority is mandated to manage and protect the Edwards Aquifer within all or parts of an eight county region, including Medina County.

According to the synopsis included with your request for preliminary comments, most of the proposed railroad line construction and operation will be south of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, and no recharging streams will be crossed by the proposed project. Based on that synopsis, the Authority offers the following preliminary comments regarding the proposed railroad line:

- All wells within the proposed project's site and right of way should be properly abandoned. If the wells are completed in, or through, the Edwards Aquifer, a plugging permit from the Authority will be required.
- Considering the number of trips required if the crushed aggregate should be hauled by trucks, it is the Authority's opinion that the proposed railroad line is the better alternative. However, the Authority would like to express need for caution in the vicinity where the proposed railroad line will be operated within the boundaries of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone (within the quarry), as the area is environmentally sensitive.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please call Mr. John Hoyt, Aquifer Science Program Manager, at (210) 222-2204, or 1-800-292-1047.

Sincerely,

  
Gregory M. Ellis  
General Manager

GME:RT:JH/ev